

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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MY KATE.

I.

She was not as pretty as women I know;
And yet all best, made of sunshine and snow,
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways,
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—

My Kate.

II.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace:
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face;
And, when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—

My Kate.

III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—

My Kate.

IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
As a thought or suggestion; she did not attract
In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I infer
'Twas her thinking of others made you think of her—

My Kate.

V.

She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—

My Kate.

VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;
They knelt more to God than they used,—that was all:
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant;
But the charm of her presence was felt when she went—

My Kate.

VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
She took as she found them, and did them all good.
It always was so with her,—see what you have!
She has made the grass greener even here . . . with her grave—

My Kate.

VIII.

My dear one!—when thou wert alive with the rest,
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best;
And, now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part
As thy smile used to do for thyself, my sweet heart—

My Kate?

—*Mrs. Browning.*

"A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE."

Mal. iii. 16.—"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

It is to be said with a solemn emphasis that we cannot choose our remembrances. The slides for the magic lantern are numberless, and we never know which will next be reflected on the screen. No doubt there

are laws of association which determine what picture shall present itself at any given moment; but, remote as the early past is from the present, they are connected by so many filaments that the picture which we least wish to see may be flashed upon our view. Nay, there is no more inevitable association than this very reluctance, and what we would most gladly forget we may find ourselves forced to remember.

It is certain that in old age happiness depends more and more on memory. We are less in society and less to society. Active recreation is less easy and attractive. If we are workers, we are more dependent for our working power than in earlier years on conditions of light, convenience, physical comfort, and elasticity of spirits, so that there are more frequent intervals when we are thrown in upon ourselves; and, if we have ceased to work, the hours of self-recollection are indefinitely multiplied. Then, too, in the slackening or the absence of sleep-persuading toil, insomnia by night often makes a large increase of the time for which one has no resources except such as he himself can furnish, while there is no longer sufficient mental enterprise to venture on new regions of exploring or speculative thought. Thus the past, the long past, must of necessity hold a large and growing place in the interior life of advancing years.

On the ground of what I have said, I want to urge my younger hearers to take good heed to the memories which they are laying up for the lengthened years which they all hope to reach.

Negatively, beware how you burden the memory with what you can never recall without increasing sorrow. There are willing and overt offences against the law of God and the enlightened moral sense of mankind, which one probably never forgives himself, even if God have forgiven him. This must be the case when one by his wrong-doing has inflicted irreparable injury on another human being, especially if the injury affects in any way the moral condition and character of the injured person. What a man will do in heaven with such a black spot on his memory God only knows, but I do not believe that in this world the lapse of half a century will make it any whiter. Far otherwise must it be with the

follies, foibles, and faults incident to young human nature, such as are in due course sorrowed for, forgiven, and outgrown, from which none are exempt except the pattern children and youth that are shown up in juvenile literature. These faults, indeed, as such, will never be remembered with pleasure; but it will be your pleasure to remember how few they were, and how early and fast you got rid of them, and got beyond and above them. Take heed, however, that they do not cleave to your growing years, else the mere folly of childhood or youth may blossom into the sin and shame of manhood or womanhood. From the very first let your standard of character and conduct be pure, and your aim high; and then the besetting faults of early years will be remembered only as the childish things that were put away and left behind.

Of course, my foremost counsel is comprised in the words of Holy Writ, "Fear God, and keep his commandments." The most precious memory of all will be the golden record of faithful duty, as under the open eye of God and in the close following of Christ. But, while you cannot dispense with this record, like the mediæval missals it admits of a great deal of ornamental work surrounding and enwreathing its separate pages; and memory, when it becomes an essential factor in the daily life, craves to be fuller and more diversified, though it cannot be made richer than by consecration to the highest and holiest.

In meeting this need, I would advise you to make as many friends as you can among those not unworthy of your friendship. Omit no opportunity of coming into pleasant and kind relations, not only with those of your own age, but with your seniors, who will in many ways be your helpers, and with those younger than yourselves, whose helpers you may be. They will scatter widely; and of those that live near you many will drop out of your acquaintance by difference of taste, occupation, or social environment. You will seem to lose them for years; but, if you live long enough, they will all come back to you, as young as ever, and will shed no little of morning light on the western slope of your life-way.

Especially seek and cherish all possible occasions for kind deeds, however slight, and for the utterance of such kindness as

you feel,—never for what you do not feel,—and every such deed or word may earn an income, sometimes compound interest, which will be paid you in full in the days when you most need it.

Then, too, I would urge you to keep your minds always active, and that within no narrow limits. Be thorough in such branches of knowledge as belong to your intended profession or calling, or specially commend themselves to your capacity or taste. But do not despise a little knowledge where you cannot get more; for “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing” only when you forget that it is little. A wide diversity of reading, study, and inquiry in the infinite range of things knowable will give you a lifelong hold on subjects with which you may have little to do in your active years, but which will renew their interest for you when your life-work slackens.

I would say, too, avail yourselves of opportunities for travel, if you can; and young people have now more of vacation time than formerly, and more of them have the means of making the best use of it. And, whether at home or abroad, take in all that you can of what is most grand and beautiful in nature and in art. Take it in, I say, not merely look at it,—feed upon it, feel it, comprehend it. You thus are stocking in your own chambers of imagery a fuller picture gallery than you can ever visit,—with pictures, too, in colors which lengthened years will only fasten and deepen. Young people do not know, and will not till they are old, how much they are doing for themselves by converse with the glorious works of God and man, or, may I not say, of God; for real genius is no less of his inspiration than holy prophecy and precept.

I would add, make your young life as happy as you can. Neglect no duty. Waste no time. An idle or wayward youth may have a superficial gayety, but not what deserves to be called happiness. It is only the enjoyment in even current with or earned by solid work that has a savor that will last. But multiply freely all sources of happiness that are timely and innocent, and the streams that flow from them, though they may run underground for years, will come to the surface when age shall want to drink from the fountains of youth.

Parents, do all that you can to make your

children happy, not, indeed, by laxity of home discipline or by the license of aught that you do not fully approve. The parent's rule should be no less inflexible than loving; and it is this alone that makes indulgence safe, while very large and generous indulgence may be yielded so long as rightful authority is held sacred, and due limits are never overpassed. I have known, I doubt not that you have, those who were bereaved of all that is bright and blessed in childhood and early youth; and they have shown and felt the loss as long as they lived. They have never been all that they might and ought to have been. Make your homes happy, as Christian homes ought to be,—such homes as your children will be glad to return to and to live in over again when you shall have passed on, and they are preparing to rejoin you in the family mansion in the Father's house on high.—*A. P. Peabody.*

THE STILL HOUR.

FAITH AND WORK.

Every day hath toil and trouble,
Every heart hath care;
Meekly bear thine own full measure,
And thy brother's share.
Fear not, shrink not, though the burden
Heavy to thee prove;
God shall fill thy mouth with gladness
And thy heart with love.

Patiently enduring ever,
Let thy spirit be
Bound by links that cannot sever
To humanity.
Labor, wait: thy Master perished
Ere his task was done.
Count not lost thy fleeting moments:
Life hath but begun.

Labor, wait, though midnight shadows
Gather round thee here,
And the storm above thee lowering
Fill thy heart with fear.
Wait in hope: the morning dawneth
When the night is gone,
And a peaceful rest awaits thee
When thy work is done.

—*J. Bailey.*

Poor hints and sketches of souls as we are, we have need to help each other to gaze at the blessed heavens instead of peering into each other's eyes to find out the motes.—*George Eliot.*

To do wrong is to inflict the surest injury on our own peace. No enemy can do us equal harm with what we do ourselves, whenever and however we violate any moral or religious obligation.— *Channing.*

Keep the soil of life soft, its sympathy tender, its imagination free, or else you lose the elementary quality of receptiveness, and all the influences of God may be scattered over you in vain.— *F. G. Peabody.*

Do your best loyally and cheerfully, and suffer yourself to feel no anxiety or fear. Your times are in God's hands. He has assigned you your place. He will direct your paths: he will accept your efforts, if they be faithful.— *Canon Farrar.*

The little worries that we meet each day
May lie as stumbling-blocks across our way,
Or we may make them stepping-stones to be
Of grace, O Lord, to thee!

— *A. E. Hamilton.*

The Lord knows how to make stepping-stones for us of our defects even: it is what he lets them be for. He remembereth—he remembereth in the making—that we are but dust,—the dust of earth, that he chose to make something a little lower than the angels out of.—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

All we have, all we can rightly get and use, all we are or can become, must be held as a sacred trust, and devoted as a willing offering. The very wit or skill by which we acquire and manage our small resources is itself a heavenly gift for earthly uses.— *C. G. Ames.*

The crown of patience cannot be received where there has been no suffering. If thou refusest to suffer, thou refusest to be crowned; but, if thou wishest to be crowned, thou must fight manfully and suffer patiently. Without labor none can obtain rest, and without contending there can be no conquest.— *Thomas à Kempis.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young,"

by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the first request.

Juvenile.

Cox's "Tales of Ancient Greece"; Church's "Stories of the Old World"; Kingsley's "Greek Fairy Tales"; "Lob-lie-by-the-fire"; "Daddy Darwin's Dovecote"; "Mary's Meadow"; "Jackanapes"; "The Story of a Short Life"; "Poetry for Home and School"; "The Barefooted Maiden"; "Eyebright" and "Just Sixteen," Susan Coolidge.

Educational.

"Pictures from English History"; Winchell's "Walks and Talks in the Geological Field"; "History of the United States," E. E. Hale; "Recreations in Astronomy," Warren; "Child's History of England," Dickens; "French-English Dictionary"; Hachette's "Children's own French Book"; Hastner's "French Composition"; Bue's "Short Stories from Modern French Authors"; Bercy's "Livre des Enfants"; "Lucie"; "Corinne"; Keetel's "Elementary French Grammar"; Bouillier's "Second Book of French Composition"; Macmillan's "Primary French Reader"; "Latin Dictionary"; "Der Leitfaden," Heness; "Das deutsche Buch der Sauveur Schule."

Miscellaneous.

"Six Months at the White House with Lincoln"; Bancroft's "Life of Washington"; "Wet Days at Edgewood"; Tullock's "Movements of Religious Thought in Britain"; Drummond's "Pax Vobiscum"; Oliphant's "The Little Pilgrim"; Longfellow's "Poems"; Jean Ingelow's "Poems"; "The Home at Heatherbrae"; "The Huguenot Family"; "My Wife and I," Mrs. Stowe; "Adam Bede"; "Romola"; "The Homestead on the Hillside"; "Oliver Twist"; "Great Expectations"; "Macleod

of Dare"; "England under Gladstone"; "A Treasury of Favorite Poems."

The Second Church Branch of the Women's Alliance, Salem, offer the following books. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

Religious.

"The Layman's Breviary," C. T. Brooks; "The Patience of Hope"; "Barnes's Notes on the Gospels," 2 vols.; "Prayers," Theodore Parker; "The Life that now is," Collyer; "The Greatest Thing in the World," Drummond; "Essentials and Non-essentials in Religion," James Freeman Clarke; "Day unto Day."

Educational.

"Elementary Treatise on Plane and Solid Geometry," B. Peirce, A.M.; "Elementary Geometry," Wm. Chauvenet; Gillespie's "Land Surveying"; "Quantitative Chemical Analysis"; "School Exhibition Book: Dialogues," etc.; "Grammar of Composition," D. Towle; "Towne's Speller"; "Standard Third Reader," Sargent; "Hillard's Third Reader"; "Common School Arithmetic," Colburn; "The Childhood of the World," E. D. Clodd; "Australia and the Islands of the Seas," E. M. C. Kellogg; "History of the Reformation in Europe"; "Dramatic French Reader," Collet; "Elementary Geometrical Drawings"; Baldwin's "Primers," Second, Fourth, and Fifth grade; "Chautauqua Text-book on Greek History."

Miscellaneous.

"Mother's Recompense," Grace Aguilar; "That Wife of Mine"; "F. Grant & Co.," G. L. Chaney; "William Henry and his Friends," A. M. Diaz; "The Lady of Lyons," Lord Lytton; "The History of Rasselas," S. Johnson; "The Two Orphans," E. G. Walraven; "The Mother's Assistant and Young Ladies' Friend"; "A Square Game"; "Tales of the Marines"; "Madeira and Portugal Rambles"; "Dr. Chase's Receipts, or Information for Everybody"; "Rambles in Japan," Canon Tristram; "What Men live by," Tolstoi; "Never too Late to Mend," C. Reade; "A House of Cards," A. S. Wolfe; "Diary of Kitty Trevelyman"; "Dream Life, and Other Poems," Stockton Bates; "Stories of English Authors"; "Christian and Leah," Leopold Kompert; "Gleanings, Pure, Pointed, and Practical";

"Mère Michel et son Chat" (French); "A Book of True Lovers," Octave Thanet; *Outlook*, 1898, 1899; *Review of Reviews*, 1897; *New England Magazine*, 1898, six months.

The King's Chapel Branch of the Cheerful Letter offers "Poetry for Home and School"; Chambers's "Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts"; "The Clares"; *Juvenile Miscellany*, vols. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; Mrs. Marcet's "Seasons"; Testament; Mary Howitt's "Tales in Verse"; "Youth's Sketch Book."

Gammer Grethel's "German Stories"; "Hymns from the Land of Luther"; "The Amulet"; "Little Plays for Children," by Maria Edgeworth. Apply to Miss Dorothy Amory, 278 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Mrs. Susan A. Hudson, 73 West 131st Street, New York City, New York, offers the *Review of Reviews* of year 1894, complete.

Miss Olive Smith, Centre Moriches, New York, offers "The House of Seven Gables."

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

I write to you to ask for suitable reading for myself, for my father, mother, two young brothers (one of them a cripple), and for Ella, our little motherless niece and granddaughter, now five years old. We will lend to others. We live near Smith's River in Patrick County, Virginia, and also near the base of the Blue Ridge, in a rough out-of-the-way region. Stuart, the county seat, is sixteen miles distant, and is our nearest railroad station. We have no libraries or high schools near us. I was thrown from a horse a few years ago, and had one ankle dislocated and the same limb broken; but I have so far recovered that I can assist with the housework and am able to go out again. We are none of us members of any church; but we attend the Primitive Baptist Church of which

Rev. Riley Radford is the pastor. (Miss) Lina Thomas, Charity, Patrick County, Virginia.

I want to thank the *Cheerful Letter* members for the reading they have sent me this winter. I do not know how I should have spent the lonely time, as I have been quite an invalid; but I am glad to say I am much better. Some one has been so kind as to send us the *Youth's Companion*. We enjoy it very much, especially our eldest boy Stanley. I would be glad to get "Marcella," by Mrs. Humphry Ward, or "A Face Illumined," by E. P. Roe. Mrs. W. C. Murphy, Chesterhill, Morgan County, Ohio.

Mrs. S. T. Lisk, Conner, Florida, would be glad to receive the following books: Avery's "Natural Philosophy"; Olney's "Elementary Geometry"; Shelley's "Skylark" [the "Skylark" is a short poem]; Southey's "Life of Nelson"; "The Modern Inquisition," William H. Prescott.

Rev. W. T. Comer, Lovelace, North Carolina, will take pleasure in reading some good religious matter, or any books which would be helpful to him in his work.

I have hesitated to ask you, but would like something to read. Old magazines, *Century's* or *Harper's*, or Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," "Marble Faun," or Holmes's "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." I have been confined to the house for the past five years. Dr. A. J. Kearns, Loup City, Nebraska.

Mrs. Carrie Miller, Garfield, Washington, asks for "Famous Stories for Young People."

Rev. J. E. Johnson, Jonesville, Yadkin County, North Carolina, would be grateful to any one sending him Drummond's "Ascent of Man."

Mrs. Hattie Lancaster, Heareford, North Carolina, will be glad to receive Barnes's History of United States and a high Political Geography.

Mrs. Lizzie Smith, Compton, Oklahoma, asks for Webster's Dictionary, Smith's "Physiology," and McGuffey's "Fifth Reader."

"Uncle Max" and "The Little Minister" will be gladly received by Miss Harriet Eiler, Walton Furnace, Virginia.

Lena Huffman, Marshfield, Missouri, a twelve-year-old girl, asks for any reading suitable for herself.

Would like very much to have some good reading. I live in the country five miles from town. We have no church any more. I have one little girl. Mrs. L. L. Burton, Ryan, Indian Territory.

My dear Sisters,—I am as far away and as lonely as ever, but, in spirit and aim, I trust nearer the standard our noble *Cheerful Letter* represents. I wish I could tell you the pleasure it is to me to subscribe to it: it might induce some that are able, and enjoy it for nothing, to do their duty, thereby sustaining the hands of its self-sacrificing staff, and enable them to enlarge this wonderful work for humanity. To those of you contributing so much to my happiness by helping me into better relations with my hard-work life, through divine reflection of him, our leader, I am very grateful, and proud to be enrolled among you. That I have not written to every one of you a personal letter is not because I do not love enough, but from physical inability to meet the demand upon my overtaken time and strength. Work on the farm is under way again. Times are changed, and not for better. Still, a living is as imperative. We who work the acres are achers ourselves often. Pardon the poor play upon the words. A little nonsense is good to stay the tear and start the smile sometimes. The books and papers you send me I distribute as far as I can. Edison begs to be remembered to his friends gratefully, and says, if he is never anything but a ploughman, he will still do no discredit anywhere. Some dear sister was sending him *Youth's Companion*, and it was solace for all his toil. It does not come now. Will one of you forward your copy, when done with it?

To show our appreciation of this most excellent paper, I will relate an incident of my children's childhood. Times were better for us then. I had been a subscriber since the birth of my first baby. My oldest son came in one day asking permission to accompany a stranger up the road a piece, to show him the way. I said, "You know nothing about him, my son." His answer was: "Oh, yes, I do, mother. He was reading *Youth's Companion* when he drove up."

Upon that I, too, was satisfied to let him go. Our confidence was not misplaced; for the young man had read to good purpose our beloved paper, and became a valued friend to my boy. With tender wish for renewed good, through the approaching blessed Easter season, I am lovingly.—*Sister Mary.*

Any one having any of Miss Alcott's or Mrs. Whitney's works to give away, please communicate with Mrs. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.

With the editor, I think that "the unselfishness and unworldliness of Edith are traits that indicate an exceptionally fine character," and that her mother should rejoice in her child's large heart. I should point out to such a child how much influence we all have on one another, and should ask her to consider how much she can see in her school and home life of such influence as the children exercise upon those younger or weaker than themselves. Then I should show her that as she herself had greater advantages than these poor girls, in her home and opportunities, she must probably influence them and be in some respects a leader. This would make her realize her responsibility to always influence them for good in the direction of true refinement and good breeding. And, as Edith herself recognizes that these friends have more "soul," talk with her of the value of this spiritual life, and how her friends may lead and influence her in this more important way, it seems to me the mother could thus avoid condescension and deterioration of manners.

I have often noticed that some little girls enjoy and prefer the society of older and cleverer girls, and carry the trait through life while again some girls always seek as companions those who from youth or slowness of mind look up to them.

"Look up, and not down," says Dr. Hale; and yet we must often look down to "Lend a Hand."—*Christina Goodwin.*

If prevention is ever better than cure, it is in the case of children's bad habits.

Among the habits they should never form is that of eating candy or munching anything between meals. If children are given candy at all, it should be at their regular meals, and then sparingly. We Americans eat more sweets, I believe, than any other civilized people; and, as a natural consequence, we have the poorest teeth and the worst digestions. Dyspepsia is said to be a peculiarly American malady. Irregular feeding leads to a restless craving to be always eating something,—a craving which in after life may lead to worst kinds of intemperance. And how much money young children waste in candy! The children of poor parents will spend a few cents for it at a time, and in a few days a few cents more, so that at the end of a year they waste an amount which would look respectable in the savings-bank.

Another bad habit is that of restless, aimless roaming about, in which children learn nothing, as they do in good, sensible play. A friend of mine, a good mother, who brings up her own children with great care, invited a little cousin whose parents were in poor circumstances for a long visit, expecting that he would go to school with her own children and have the same advantages. She was obliged to send him home after a few months' trial, and told me sadly that she could do nothing with him. He was so accustomed to roaming the streets at all hours and buying candy at the shops, if he missed a regular meal, that he could not bear to be kept in a beautiful place of several acres, with opportunities for every kind of play. Instead of joining with his cousins, he would say, "Oh, if I only could get out of this old prison, I would never come back to it." This poor little fellow was only seven, an early age, certainly, to have formed a tramp's habits. I trust there is no case like him in the families of the Mothers' Council, but he is certainly a warning; and what kind of a citizen will he make when grown up? L.

In connection with this latter topic of which L. speaks, I want to ask if some one can suggest occupations for girls and boys during vacations. It is now my boy's spring vacation, and it seems impossible for me to suggest something for both morning and afternoon during the ten days.

Of course there are some days, or half-

days, when certain things can be done; but at other times there seems to be very little. Other boys, equally unoccupied, come for him; and together they wander aimlessly about, or get into mischief bothering somebody, or part of the time find reasonable play.

Fortunately, these vacations are short, but the longer one will soon come, when many children will have many unoccupied weeks; and then it will be hard to plan for them. I feel as if I ought to provide something to keep mine well employed constantly, and yet I confess I don't know how. Yet a line from an old verse frequently looms up before me, "For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

A. L. H.

THE RIGHT WAY: MARY OSBORNE'S METHOD.

When Mrs. Wakeman gave out the composition to her class, she said to her scholars that it was perfectly easy for them to write compositions if they only thought so, and she expected that every one of them would come prepared. There must not be a single failure.

Mary Osborne spoke very differently to her class. She told her scholars that writing compositions was very difficult:

"The way is to get your paper and pencil all ready, and sit down at a table, and then open the Bible and read the verses that give an account of the storm, and then shut up the book, and begin at once to write upon the paper what you can remember.

"Still it requires a good deal of resolution to do this, and a good deal of perseverance to finish your work after you have begun it. I don't expect all of you will succeed. If I get three compositions out of the class, I shall be satisfied, and I shall think that those who write them deserve a great deal of credit."

As Mary Osborne's scholars went home, they every one resolved that they would write. Since the teacher admitted that it was a difficult thing to do, while at the same time she told them exactly how to go to work to do it, and said that she did not expect that all of them would succeed, and that those who should succeed would show a great deal of resolution and perseverance, and would deserve a great deal of credit, and moreover held out the

idea that the younger ones would on the whole be quite as likely to succeed as the older ones, if not more likely, they all resolved to try. Even Johnny* himself resolved to try. He told his mother that he never *had* written a composition, but that he did not believe but that he *could* write one, since Miss Osborne had told him exactly how to do it.

And true enough, at the next meeting of the class, Johnny was seen coming into the pew with his paper in his hand. Four of the other scholars also had papers. The rest, though they had resolved to write, had not kept their resolution.

"Five compositions!" said Mary Osborne, with an expression of great satisfaction on her face. I did not expect nearly so many. And now I will read them. I will read Johnny's first."

So she opened Johnny's paper, and found within two lines, which, as nearly as types can represent Johnny's chirography, were as follows: "tHey picHeD The THings oVer bored to sAve the SHIP From sincinG."

Mary Osborne read these lines aloud, preserving, however, a very grave and serious face. Jenny Dart began to laugh, and Johnny looked up at her quite indignantly. Jenny, however, perceiving that the teacher did not smile, sobered herself again very suddenly.

"She is laughing because it is so short, I suppose," said Johnny, "but that is because I could not write any more, my hand was so tired. I could think of ever so much more to say, but I could not write it very well."

"It is long enough," said Mary Osborne. "It would not be best for you to try to write any more than that for the first time."

"I suppose there are a great many mistakes in it," said Johnny.

"Are there?" said Mary Osborne, opening the paper again, and looking at the writing. "I did not take particular notice of any mistakes. Let me see if you have spelled the words right. Ship. S-h-i-p. Yes, that is right. Things. T-h-i-n-g-s. Yes, that is right, too. I think you have spelled almost all the words right, and that is very hard to do when you first write compositions. I see that you have printed some of

* Johnny was a small boy, admitted to the class as a visitor.

the letters when you did not know how to write them. That was right. When you are writing a composition, always print the letters when you come to any that you don't know how to write.

"It is written very plain, too, so that anybody could read it. I think you might write a letter. If you wanted anything from the city, such as a sled, for example, and you saw an advertisement in a newspaper telling who had sleds to sell, I think you could write a letter to the man and ask him to send you one by express, so that he would understand it perfectly well. And that is a great thing."

Johnny was very much pleased to hear Miss Osborne speak thus of his composition. He determined that as soon as he got home he would sit down and write another.

It was in the same spirit, though not in the same terms, that Mary Osborne commented upon the other compositions as she read them in succession. That is to say, in reading the several compositions, her attention was turned not to searching for faults in them, to criticise, but for excellences to commend. When she came to a good sentence, she said, "That is very well expressed." When she came to good handwriting, she said: "How well you have written this, Mary! Here is a line that is excellent. Every letter in it is well formed. See!"

And, so saying, she would hold up the composition, that all the scholars might see the handwriting.

It might at first be imagined that by thus pointing out what was right in each composition, and saying nothing about what was wrong, the scholars would not know what their faults were, and so would not be able to correct them. But it was not so; for Mary Osborne gave her scholars continual instructions to guide them in the future, though she did not base these instructions on fault-finding in respect to the past.

For example, the compositions of the young scholars in her class were all very faulty in regard to punctuation. Mary Osborne took no notice of this in reading them; but, when at length she came upon one that was correct, she said: "I see you have made your periods all right at the ends of the sentences. It is an excellent thing to put in the stops properly when you are writing.

If you look in any book," she added, addressing herself now to the whole class, "you will see that there is a period at the end of every sentence, and that the next sentence begins with a capital letter."

"I don't know what a capital letter is," said Johnny, "nor a period, nor a sentence. What is a sentence?"

How unreasonable it would be to find fault with the composition of such a boy as Johnny on account of errors in respect to commas and periods and capitals, when he did not even know what any of these things were! And boys of his age never know about such things as these unless they are explained to them; and, when they are explained to them, the explanations should never come to them associated with criticisms and fault-finding in respect to previous efforts, when in making the efforts they did as well as they knew how.

"There is one thing more I must tell you," added Mary Osborne, "and that is about capital letters. *Capital* means *head*, and capital letters are head letters. They are used for beginnings. They are larger than the other letters and are made differently. You must make capital letters, if you know how to make them, at the beginning of all sentences and of all names of persons and places. If you look at any page of the Bible, you will find that each verse begins with a capital letter."

Here the younger scholars in the class looked into their Testaments to see the capital letters at the beginning of the verses.

Mary Osborne went on in this manner explaining to her pupils various things connected with composition writing, but not connecting her explanations at all with any faults she had observed in their work. She noticed and remembered the faults she had observed, but avoided speaking of them or making any allusion to them, even indirect allusions, but treasured them up in her mind, intending, when the next subject of composition should be assigned, to give her class particular instruction in regard to all these points. It would be much better, she thought, for *her* to remember the points in which her scholars were deficient, and give them the necessary teaching in respect to them when the time should come for them to write again, and when, of course,

they could immediately put her teachings into practice, than to do it then, and trust to *their* treasuring up what she should tell them, so as to have it ready when the time should come for making another trial. Besides, as has already been said, her instructions, if given when the time should come for a new exercise, would take the form, not of fault-finding with an exercise performed, but of aid and assistance in respect to one to be performed; and so would be likely to be listened to by her scholars with attention and received with pleasure.—*Jacob Abbott, in "Mary Osborne."*

ARRIVAL OF THE BIRDS.

[To May 16.]

Geothlypis trichas — Maryland yellow-throat.

Chelidon erythrogaster — barn-swallow.

Dendroica blackburniæ — blackburnian warbler.

Piranga erythromelas — scarlet tanager.

Zonotrichia leucophrys — white-crowned sparrow.

Chordeiles virginianus — night-hawk.

Vireo solitarius — blue-headed vireo.

PROCESSION OF THE FLOWERS.

[To May 18.]

Barbarea vulgaris — yellow rocket.

Calla palustris — water arum.

Cardamine rhomboidea — spring cress.

Carum carui — caraway.

Carya alba — shag-bark hickory.

Carya porcina — pig-nut.

Cerastium arvense — field chickweed.

Clintonia borealis — Clintonia.

Comandra umbellata — bastard toadflax.

Cornus Canadensis — bunch-berry.

Cratægus oxyacantha — English hawthorn.

Cypripedium acaule — stemless lady's-slipper.

Cypripedium parviflorum — smaller yellow lady's-slipper.

Cypripedium pubescens — larger yellow lady's-slipper.

Erigeron bellidifolius — robin's plantain.

Gaylussacia frondosa — blue tangle, dangleberry.

Geranium molle — cranesbill.

Geum rivale — water or purple avens.

Hypoxis erecta — star-grass.

Juglans cinerea — butternut.

Juniperus communis — common juniper.

Kalmia angustifolia — sheep laurel.

Lonicera glauca — small honeysuckle.

Lupinus perennis — wild lupine.

Menyanthes trifoliata — buckbean.

Nasturtium Armoracia — horseradish.

Nasturtium officinale — water-cress.

Orchis spectabilis — showy orchis.

Osmorrhiza longistylis — smoother sweet cicely.

Osmunda cinnamomea — cinnamon fern.

Osmunda Claytonia — flowering fern.

Osmunda regalis — flowering fern.

Potentilla argentea — silvery cinquefoil.

Prunus Americana — wild yellow plum.

Quercus coccinea, var. tinctoria — black oak.

Quercus rubra — red oak.

Rhododendron nudiflorum — swamp-pink, pinxter-flower.

Robinia pseudacacia — common locust.

Senecio aureus — golden ragwort.

Sisyrinchium angustifolium — blue-eyed grass.

Smilacina racemosa — false spikenard.

Smilacina stellata — star-flowered Solomon's seal.

Trifolium hybridum — Alsike clover.

Trifolium pratense — red clover.

Veratrum viride — American white hellebore.

Veronica serpyllifolia — thyme-leaved speedwell.

Viburnum lantanoides — American way-faring tree.

Viburnum lentago — sweet viburnum.

Viola lanceolata — lance-leaved violet.

Viola palmata, variegated form — common blue violet.

Viola primulæfolia — primrose-leaved violet.

Viola striata — pale violet.

Small service is true service while it lasts :

Of humblest friends, bright creature, scorn not one.

The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,

Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.

William Wordsworth.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

To tell a Person's Age.

This comes from a German newspaper. Ask a person to write on paper the number of the month in which he was born, and multiply it by 2; then add 5 to the sum, and multiply the latter by 50; add his age to the quotient, and deduct 365, and add 115 to the difference. You then ask the person to state the result of the calculation. The first number or numbers will be the month in which he was born; the last, his age.

Distinguished Authors in Disguise.

1. A common given name and a male child.
2. A metal and a metal-worker.
3. A domestic animal.
4. Another domestic animal.
5. The same animal prepared for food.
6. A crustacean.
7. A fastening.
8. A fastening and an animal.
9. A native of a northern country.
10. Austere.
11. A large horse.
12. A kind of leather and a fish.
13. A dark color.
14. An opposite color.
15. The two colors blended.
16. A dark color intensified.
17. Happy and a mineral.
18. Merry.

F. E. B.

Conundrums.

1. Why was Martin Luther like a dyspeptic robin?
2. Why do women seek husbands named William?
3. Who is the oldest lunatic?
4. Where was Time raised?
5. Why is a negro woman like a doorway?
6. Why is a lance like the moon?
7. Why is a mouse like hay?
8. Why is beefsteak like a locomotive?

Enigma.

I am composed of 53 letters.

My 31, 10, 19, 46, 17, 37, is a festival.

My 19, 7, 38, 33, 43, is a mountain mentioned in the Bible.

My 15, 24, 2, 42, 29, 27, 48, 41, 50, 6, is a modern invention.

My 44, 32, 20, 52, 12, is a kind of spirit.

My 16, 4, 8, 23, is used by soldiers.

My 34, 45, 39, 14, had to do with the ark.

My 47, 53, 22, 18, is often put in the ground in the spring.

My 11, 41, 30, is what the sun gives us.

My 3, 25, 9, 37, 33, 5, 49, is what the birds do every year.

My 40, 35, 1, 28, 13, 21, 51, 26, 36, is a heroine in one of Shakespeare's plays.

My whole is a quotation from one of Longfellow's poems.

*Answers to Puzzles in April Number.**Charades.*

1. Pinafore.
2. Mahogany.

Nonsense Numbers.

1. One add *n*, and it is reduced to *none*.
2. From five take *V*, leaving *fie*. Prefix *o* = naught, and the result is "O, fie!"
3. Half of ten (*X*) is *V*, one less than ten is *IX*, two-thirds of ten is *en*. This makes the word *vixen*.
4. Half of twenty = *two*; half a dozen, *i.e.*, half of twelve = *two*. Put this in the place of the *two* first subtracted, and twenty is seen.
5. Behead the odd number *seven*.

Beheadings.

1. Scan.
2. Spark.
3. Crest.

THE TENACIOUS OAK-LEAVES.

It is not easy to get at the secret of the oak in retaining its leaves throughout the whole calendar, for here in late April are seen the white and red oaks still defying the winds. Now, if the oak-leaf were constructed on the plan of the buttonwood-leaf, whose stem grows like a protecting cup over the bud of the following year, we could frame a theory readily; but it does nothing of the kind. These persistent oak-leaves are placed *beneath* the new buds; while those of the buttonwood fell in early autumn, exposing the tender bud to the winter storms. If we examine the white

oak branch, we shall find that many of the leaves have been twisted off by the wind, leaving only a short remnant of a stem beneath the buds; and even these adhere so tenaciously as to leave a fresh green scar upon removal. They yield only as they are pushed off by the swelling bud above them.

THE BROWNIE-JUGS AND THE BROWNIE.

All through the winter months we might have seen our brownie-jugs, as large as hazel-nuts, neatly secured to various twigs in the thickets; but I have passed them until I could bring the reader face to face with the little potter that is responsible for them. He has been in hiding during the cold months, and was to be known only by his works; but now (April 28) he is out again, and will soon make his first jug after the pattern that his ancestors have handed down to him, for long before the human vase-maker fashioned his clay upon the wheel these little jugs were being turned out by *Eumenes fraterna*. Such is the name his historians give him.

Jugs serve a variety of uses; but none of human fashion is ever used for precisely such purposes as these of *Eumenes*, which serve as a receptacle for treasure, a larder, and a home as well. I have seen many a jug catalogued in a bric-à-brac sale that did not have nearly so interesting a history as one of these clay pots of the vase-maker wasp. It is made of sand and yellow mud. When completed, the wasp lays an egg within it, and then proceeds to pack it full of tiny green caterpillars, each of which she has paralyzed, though not killed, by a stab of her sting. The opening of the vase is then plugged with a mud cork. Presently the egg hatches into a little grub, that feeds for the rest of its days on the living store of food. By the time the supply has run short, the grub has become a chrysalis, and soon pushes out the plug, and appears, a full-grown wasp like its parent; and it will make as pretty a jug as the one it leaves, the first time it tries. *From Sharp Eyes, by William Hamilton Gibson.*

Mrs. Emma Miner has moved from Lisbon, New Hampshire, to Middlesex Street, Springfield, Mass.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

After June 1 the address of the treasurer will be Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents or to libraries that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

It is contrary to the rules of the *Cheerful Letter Exchange* to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.